





## **Delamere Forest School**

### Inspection report

LEA Salford
Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

**Inspection dates** 26 – 27 May 2011

**Reporting inspector** Enid Korn

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

**Type of school** Special

**School category** Non-maintained residential special

Age range of pupils6-19Gender of pupilsMixedNumber on roll17School (total)17

Appropriate authorityThe governing bodyChairMalcolm Joels

**Headteacher** Keith Cox

**Date of previous school inspection** 12-13 September 2006

School address Inscape House

Silkhey Grove, Walkden Road Worsley, Manchester M28 7FG

**Telephone number** 0161 703 2490

Fax number

**Email address** info@delamereschool.org.uk

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### Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two Pikuach inspectors. The inspectors visited four lessons, two of Jewish Studies, an IT lesson that had a Jewish focus and a music lesson in the 6<sup>th</sup> form. Inspectors observed eight individual tutorials for Jewish Studies and observed two Jewish Studies teachers and two others. Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the designated headteacher, the chair of governors, the governor with responsibility for Jewish Studies, the two Jewish Studies teachers, the art and music teachers, the social worker and the students. Inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including the curriculum planning, students' work, records of students, the assessment systems, Jewish Studies policies, the school development plan, governors' minutes and the school prospectus. Inspectors looked at the questionnaire responses from eight parents and from students and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Students' progress and whether there are any differences in progress between the different ability groups
- The quality of the teaching
- The leadership of the school.

### Information about the school

Delamere Forest is a very small, non-maintained Jewish day and residential special school that caters for day and boarding students. It is the only Jewish residential special school and it provides for Jewish students from all over the country. There are currently 17 students on roll, aged from 11 to 19. Historically, the school has provided for a small number of students who are non-Jewish and it continues to do so. Ten of the students are currently resident. All boarders are Jewish. All students have a statement of special educational needs. Students have a wide range of needs and many are on the autistic spectrum. At the time of the inspection there were no girls on roll.

In September 2010, the school became federated with Inscape House Special School and relocated onto the Inscape House School site. The boarding accommodation moved to the centre of orthodox Jewish North Manchester around six miles away from the school and students are brought to the school daily. Since the federation, the headteacher of Inscape House is also the headteacher of Delamere Forest School, although the two schools operate as separate identities, each with its own governing body. There have been extensions to the site to accommodate the

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Delamere Forest School, which has its own entrance and facilities. The two schools share the school hall and grounds for physical education.

In 2009, the school was placed into 'special measures' by Ofsted following its secular studies inspection. Following a re-inspection in May 11-12 2011, the school was taken out of 'special measures' and placed into a less serious category and given a 'notice to improve'.

The school has had no specific Jewish Studies teachers from October, near the start of this academic year, until very recently, when two teachers were appointed. These teachers both work part time.

The last Jewish Studies inspection took place in September 2006. This Pikuach inspection does not include the boarding accommodation.

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## **Inspection judgements**

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

### **Overall effectiveness**

3

## **Capacity for sustained improvement**

3

## **Main findings**

Delamere Forest School provides a satisfactory level of Jewish education for its students when judged against its recorded aims in the school's brochure that are "To meet pupils' special needs and maximise each individual pupil's attainments, skills and independence within a reassuring Jewish atmosphere". Seven of the eight parents who responded agreed that the life of the school gives their child a good understanding of Jewish values and one parent wrote "Delamere Forest is an excellent school in all aspects of my son's education and well-being."

Students attain suitable standards in relation to their abilities in their Jewish learning. There is insufficient data for inspectors to evaluate the progress of students over time or whether some ability groups make better progress than others in their overall Jewish learning. Records show that students who are unable to read Hebrew when they enrol do not make sufficient progress in the development of this basic skill. In part this is due to the lack of time allocated. Students' achievement is satisfactory and their enjoyment of their Jewish learning is good. The school provides a good quality wide range of curriculum enrichment activities, including Shabbat activities. These experiences significantly contribute to the students' enjoyment of their learning and to their achievement. Students express and demonstrate their enjoyment during lessons and during daily *tefillah* (assembly prayers). The personal development of the students is good. Students say that they feel safe. They are learning, within their abilities, to lead a healthy Jewish lifestyle. Behaviour in lessons and during informal times is good. Students make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in terms of orthodox Jewish living is good. Students frequently help lead the tefillah (prayers) in the mornings with enthusiasm and enjoyment that is outstanding in its purity and spirituality.

In relation to Jewish Studies, leadership is satisfactory. Many of the weaknesses in the provision identified in the last Pikuach inspection remain. The school has been Delamere Forest School

without Jewish Studies teachers since the start of the academic year until the very recent appointments. During this time, a basic provision of one lesson an week of Jewish studies has been provided by a member of the secular staff and there have been activities in secular subjects that promote the Jewish ethos. Governors have monitored the provision in Jewish Studies but not the achievement and progress. There are positive signs that the provision for Jewish Studies has started to move forward. There is now a governor with responsibility for Jewish Studies who has experience in special education and who is acting as the supportive friend and curriculum leader. She has recently amalgamated records of progress. The two newly appointed members of staff, one of whom is a Rabbi, are suitable role models for all pupils including the most orthodox.

Governors have made some insightful and good decisions, particularly the relocation of the residential home into the locality of the orthodox Jewish community of North Manchester. This move has facilitated a rapid increase in very positive links to the Jewish community. These links enrich and extend the informal curriculum and promote an orthodox Jewish way of life, such as students attending the Bnei Akiva Shabbat services. There are now students applying to the school from the ultra-orthodox community that the school believe would otherwise not have done so if the relocation had not occurred. The soft federation and relocation of the school to Inscape House has been a positive move, and the leadership of the headteacher is very supportive of the promotion of the Jewish ethos of the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, teachers demonstrated good teaching skills, discussing targets with pupils and presenting work appropriately to students' needs. The teachers are very new and do not yet know their students well. Consequently their planning for the individual tutorials lacks the focused learning objectives necessary to guide their teaching and move students' learning forward. Improvements to the quality of the marking so that it is more informative to students and also the introduction of homework would extend students' learning and give them opportunity to reflect upon their work. One parent commented "My son doesn't bring school work home".

The curriculum provision is satisfactory overall. The formal curriculum taught in Jewish Studies time is not sufficiently developed to give appropriate guidance to teachers to develop their students' learning. Time allocated to Jewish Studies within the school day is considerably less than that in other Jewish schools. The informal curriculum and the enrichment activities are good and through these additional aspects of the curricular provision, the school fulfils its aims. Planned links between the curriculum taught at school and the informal curriculum provided at the house need development. There is a new curriculum structure being introduced based upon a core curriculum and four learning pathways, differentiated to meet each student's individual learning needs. This is a suitable structure but as yet is only in the form of

a framework and it requires further definition and development. The curriculum learning pathways need to be better structured. Greater divergence is needed so that for example, for those students who will not be able to learn to read Hebrew, reading is not a part of the expectations.

Assessment procedures to support students' learning, including teachers' marking, are not of a satisfactory quality. They lack sufficient depth and do not identify students' learning and progress, or their difficulties. The newly produced baseline assessment consists of fifteen questions and the fact that these are being shared with students and parents is good practice. More detail is required in the baseline assessments to establish students' starting points in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The school has recently developed a method for tracking students' progress by using the national assessment descriptors for religious education (P scales and National Curriculum levels). These are not yet linked to the school's Jewish Studies curriculum. The capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory because the changes in the provision are yet to take effect.

The care, guidance and support provided for the students are good. Induction procedures for parents and students are good. All staff speak of the improvements that they observe in student's behaviour within a few weeks of them starting the school. The transition to the new living and learning locations has been difficult for the students, most of whom distrust changes in routines. Their current confidence and feeling of 'being 'at home' in the new surroundings is a reflection of the care and support provided. The school selects with care the appropriate facilities for the next stage in students' education and acts to prepare students for the transition, but these preparations do not always include support for a Jewish lifestyle. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good and there are good links with many Jewish organisations locally and in Israel.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

### Raise achievement and progress in Jewish studies by;

- developing the structured core curriculum and the four planned pathways
- ensuring that each student has an individualised learning plan with clearly defined targets
- teachers planning lessons with very precise learning objectives
- providing more time for Jewish Studies
- introducing homework into the provision
- linking together the curriculum of the school and the activities at the house and out of school

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• extending the Jewish practices and opportunities for learning at the house.

# Ensure that the school can track the progress and achievement of all pupils accurately in their learning of skills, knowledge and understanding in Jewish Studies by

- establishing a detailed and secure baseline assessment
- linking the curriculum and the assessment procedures
- improving teachers' skills in assessment including during lessons
- establishing routines for regular assessment, setting smart targets and evaluating progress
- providing detailed marking.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The aims of the school are to ensure an experience of a good Jewish life based upon orthodox practices and for students to be able to live an independent Jewish life. To a great extent these aims are met. Having reviewed lesson plans, inspectors evaluated that the work is appropriate to the abilities of the students and from this perspective the standards that are reached and the students' attainment is satisfactory. The school's records show that students have not made adequate progress in learning to read Hebrew.

The lack of detailed records of previous learning and the fact of the curriculum not being fully developed makes it difficult for the school to show attainment and progress. Students have very recently been assessed to identify their level of learning, but there is a lack of supporting work to fully confirm these assessments.

For those students who have reading records because they are learning to read Hebrew, standards have stayed the same in reading over several years. The school should consider whether, for some students, learning to read Hebrew is inappropriate. This evaluation should be based upon their National Curriculum levels and their inability to master reading in English. For such students, constantly trying to learn the letter names of the first six letters of the Aleph Bet can be demoralising. The school needs to evaluate whether this is the best use of the Jewish Studies learning time. Students are taught to read Hebrew in order to participate in formal Jewish life, such as saying blessings and participating in services. Other methods of tuition such as recognising words and pictures from memory, chanting or singing prayers could be more appropriate methods of tuition. For those able to learn to read Hebrew, the time allocated of two very short practice sessions a week is unrealistic and less than an able learner would require in order to make satisfactory progress.

Although students' achievement is satisfactory, their enjoyment with school and their Jewish learning is good. Students enjoy being at this school. This is reflected in their verbal and written comments and in their demeanour around the school. They say that they feel safe and that there is no bullying in the school or at the house. The staff are caring and they listen to the students' needs and requests. Arrangements are always made to provide support as needed, such as accompanying students to services for Shabbat and when they are travelling home for the holidays. Students say that they are well prepared and know how to keep themselves safe. They know how to cross the road safely, a skill they need more now that they have moved into a location where they are sent on small shopping expeditions to the kosher shop. Students are aware of the dangers associated with some Internet sites. An older pupil said the school had helped and supported him so that he could stop smoking. Most pupils say their opinions and requests are listened to by the adults. No parents have raised any concern related to their child's safety at school.

Behaviour in Jewish Studies and other lessons observed is good. This is primarily because class sizes are small, the ratio of adults is high and teachers are skilful in providing many different activities in one lesson. Most students have sufficient self-control to walk quietly along corridors, to sit quietly at break and lunch times, to wait their turn at dinner time and to follow school rules and expectations. The staff comment on the positive changes they observe in students' behaviour when they enter into the ordered and positive environment of the school. Students are prepared well for changes to routine. Inspectors were impressed by the levels of concern for others shown at times, such as an older student helping a younger one put on his *teffilin* (prayer phylacteries) during morning prayers.

Students live a healthy Jewish lifestyle at the school and house and they know what is right and wrong in terms of living a Jewish lifestyle. They only eat kosher foods and in the house they separate milk and meat; students respect these rules. In all lessons in the school, pupils wear a kippa and some wear tzitzit. Most voluntarily attend Friday night and Shabbat services, walking from their house to these services and they participate in Shabbat meals organised by the community. Students make a good contribution to the school and wider community. They have collected for a range of charities, both Jewish and non-Jewish and sales of their *Chanuka* cards made over £100 for the school. The school and the students are rightly proud of these cards that they had designed and made themselves. During *tefillah* some students demonstrate a high degree of spiritual enjoyment. They are developing a good understanding of right and wrong in relation to how to live a Jewish lifestyle and they know that it is important to collect for charities. Students are caring and considerate of each other and they work and relax alongside others harmoniously. Students have a sound understanding of Jewish culture through the curriculum and the enrichment activities, by attending Shabbat and festival gatherings and playing

games in the house during Shabbat and festivals. Students answer the phones in the office at lunch times but they could be provided with more opportunities for responsibility to support the Jewish life of the school. In relation to their underlying difficulties, students' development of workplace skills is satisfactory. Mostly they are able to work alongside others and to converse with others. In work placements, they show that they are able to cope in environments such as a kosher shop. All students are prepared for and pass a basic food hygiene examination and those who are able take GCSE or other examinations and these qualifications help prepare them for their future economic well-being.

### These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3		
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress			
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3		
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2		
How well do pupils behave?			
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?			
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?			
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>			
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?			
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?			

## How effective is the provision?

All the lessons on the timetable during the inspection were observed by the inspectors. Some were whole class lessons and some were individual tutorials. In all of the lessons observed, teachers demonstrated good attributes that promote good learning. Teachers have already developed a good relationship with their students and the students trust and like the teachers although they have taught at the school for only three weeks or less. Teachers listen and respond sensitively to the students' comments and they provide considerable praise and positive comments that raise the students' self esteem. The pace in tutorials is quick, with many subjects discussed in a short length of time, but as the time is short, most is spent on recalling previous learning and very little time is left for new learning. In the class lessons, the teamwork between adults is good. Lessons are planned well with many practical activities for active learning and opportunities for students to work in pairs. In one lesson seen, these activities were making flowers or edible 'ten commandments' as

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

the lesson took place a few days before the festival of *Shavuot*. New technology, such as an interactive white board, was used well to demonstrate to students visually and teachers were constantly questioning pupils to ascertain their learning. At times, this questioning was more related to the practical activity than ensuring students understood the underlying Jewish learning. A lack of assessment data meant that all students had the same teaching irrespective of their capabilities. Over a period of time, the marking has been minimal with few written comments and work has not been dated, making it difficult to review students' progress. The assessment procedures are new and not clearly linked to the curriculum or the tracking system. Consequently, assessment information is not sufficiently informative and does not satisfactorily support the students' learning. The school is now using the students' levels in English to identify realistic expectations and broad targets for reading Hebrew and this is a positive step forward. These targets need to be broken down into small achievable steps when more assessment data becomes available.

The planned core curriculum lacks continuity and progression. This planning is mainly based upon the Jewish festivals and is on a three year cycle. The same broad focus for learning is repeated many times e.g. "Tishrei festivals" without an indication of progression in learning. Jewish ethics and *midot* (Jewish ways of behaving and performing good deeds and actions) are insufficiently emphasised in the curriculum planning. The planning does not include Shabbat, an essential ingredient for any Jewish Studies curriculum, or ritual activities such as hand washing, which was being taught at the time of the inspection, or Kiddush and havdala; each essential for promoting the school's aims of orthodox Jewish living. The taught curriculum is broader in practice than the recorded planning. There is no recognition in the planning of the many practical activities that the students participate in regularly that are related to a Jewish way of life. These include reciting *hamotzei*, (a blessing before eating bead), benching, (the blessing after eating) and Shabbat activities in the house and community. During the inspection, evidence was seen of Jewish Studies learning promoted in IT, art and music lessons, but this is also not in the planning.

The school has identified criteria for defining from its fifteen question assessment system, which pathway a student should follow. All the pathways are text based, so none are suitable for a student who lacks the ability to read. Other religions are incorporated into the Jewish Studies planning document, but work seen during the inspection suggests that these are not taught during Jewish Studies time to Jewish students. Partnerships with other organisations to support the provision are satisfactory overall and good for the informal education. These partnerships include links to UJIA, the Friendship Circle and Bnei Akiva. The school would benefit from establishing partnerships with other Jewish schools, including special schools, to develop its curriculum.

The care guidance and support provided are good. The *tefillah* sessions are a spiritual occasion that impressed the inspectors. These sessions are outstanding in terms of inclusivity and enjoyment of the students, some of whom help lead the services. They are led well by a member of the North Manchester community and the Jewish studies staff help and encourage students who are reluctant or unable to participate. Traditional parts of the *shacharit* (morning service) are covered such as the morning blessings, the *Shema*, an abbreviated *Amidah* and *Olaynu*. These sessions help the school meet its stated aims. Opportunities for students who know these particular prayers to learn others should be planned for.

The school has a well-defined induction system taking place before students join the school. The school social worker visits the student's home and then discusses with the school staff the level of observance in the home, to accommodate each student's religious needs The staff at the residential establishment are not Jewish but they have had training to understand many of the basic principles of Judaism, particularly of kashrut and of not breaking basic Shabbat rules. The two new Jewish Studies teachers both expressed their desire to improve the provision in the house, particularly for Shabbat. This need has started to be addressed and the newly appointed Rabbi visits the students at the house.

A strength of the school and a mark of the care and support that staff offer is the way in which all staff listen to the wishes of students and accommodate these. For example, individual Ivrit lessons are to be provided for one student who would like to study this language. Staff provide a role model of respect for the students and for each other and promote a culture of respect for the beliefs and religions of others. There are good partnerships with Connexions, an external agency that supports with careers guidance for students with special educational needs. Students transfer to a range of colleges, including Langdon which is a local Jewish facility. The school's behaviour systems are effective and many rewards and certificates are provided. As yet there are no similar certificates for Jewish learning

#### These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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## How effective are leadership and management?

At present there is no identified knowledgeable person with responsibility to lead and manage the Jewish Studies provision. Despite this, there is a fairly unified vision for how the school should move forward. The headteachers, governors, teaching staff and support workers are all determined that the school should become a centre of excellence for Jewish Special Educational Needs provision. However there is little in the school improvement planning in relation to Jewish Studies and therefore, how this ambition is to be achieved is not identified. The current headteacher knows all students very well and is concerned for their welfare but neither he nor his successor have the knowledge to lead in Jewish Studies. The two new teachers are both newly qualified and as such cannot undertake a leadership role in their probationary year. The school would be well advised to bring in external support for this role, at least for one year. Equality of opportunity is currently satisfactory, but if more activities take place in the house and there are more Jewish non-boarders, then the leadership will need to consider how to ensure all continue to have equal access to the provision.

Governors have not been sufficiently challenging in the past. For example they have not asked for formal reports on the provision, standards and progress in Jewish Studies and some of the policies are outdated and need to be reviewed. Governors have recently made some good, far-sighted decisions that are already showing some good impact. The relocation of the residential accommodation to North Manchester supports the Jewish ethos and learning well. The school's Rabbi can now visit on Shabbat and there are increasing links with the orthodox community. Appropriate partnerships have been formed with young people, such as with Bnei Akiva where students go to daven (pray) on Shabbat and with the Friendship Circle. There are partnerships with the local business community for work experience and for activities such as printing students' Chanuka cards. There is no formalised link with an external rabbinic authority to provide halachic guidance. Governors have been mindful in their staff appointments of the need to increasingly meet the requirements of the ultraorthodox as well as their former catchment. They are keen to ensure that their new Jewish Studies staff have appropriate training for Jewish Studies teaching, and through the soft federation with Inscape, general in-service training. The new headteacher has already started training in assessment skills for of all the staff and is to be the mentor for the new staff. Unlike most Jewish schools, governors do not expect parents to fund the Jewish education. Their support for the school in this respect is good, as governors access charitable funds to support the provision. The school has a well defined induction system before students join and this provides good support to parents when making the decision to send their child to a residential school. Inspectors were impressed that the headteachers travel to London to meet the parents of the students in their school. Parental requirements are taken into

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account, when planning the Jewish studies provision. For example, a student from the ultra-orthodox community has additional tuition and is frequently taught in Yiddish. Parents are partners when planning the *bar mitzah* tuition and celebrations for their sons and their views are sought when planning transfer to the next stage in education and living. The school's contribution to community cohesion is growing. Links with the community to improve the students' exposure to a Jewish lifestyle are increasing. Students attend monthly Shabbat meals with the Friendship Circle, where they meet students from Yavneh, Manchester Mesivta and Langdon College. They have also attended parties for *Chanuka, Purim* and *Lag b'Omer* organised by this organisation. As a part of the Jewish community, the students have organised a bagel brunch and raised money for World Jewish Relief, they have hosted the Israeli War Disabled soldiers and have raised money for Israel following the forest fires. The school has very recently received funding for providing outreach support within the Manchester Jewish community for parents with children who have communication disorders. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

### These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

### Sixth form

There are seven pupils in the sixth form. Six of these students have taken an external examination. The seventh has arrived only two weeks ago. One student has GCSE grade C in religious education. The four students in the younger group have all sat ASDAN, Jewish Studies qualification, but it is not yet known if they have passed. No specific Jewish Studies teaching was available for sixth form during the inspection. The staff say that ethical questions such as 'What is slavery?' were discussed around Pesach time. There is a less formal atmosphere in the sixth form room and the staff treat the students more as adults. Students respond well and in the music lesson observed, they showed that they are able to work together as a

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group. The most able use phrases such as *lashon hora* (speaking ill of others) and explain what this means and what its impact can be. Students showed at times a real consideration for the feelings and needs of others. The staff prepare students well for independent acts such as going shopping alone. Students would benefit from having more opportunities for responsibility within the school.

Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3
Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3

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## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding
		school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
		In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be
		outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school
		that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of
		schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory
		school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8,
		32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An
		inadequate school needs to make significant
		improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.
		Pikuach inspectors will make further visits until it
		improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged
		inadequate.

## **Common terminology used by inspectors**

Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and

examination results and in lessons.

Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and

over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

Achievement: the progress and success of a pupil in their

learning, training or development. This may refer

to the acquisition of skills, knowledge,

understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or

health.

Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue

improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what

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the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.

Leadership and management:

the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. **Inspection report:** Delamere Forest School **18 of 19** 

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